
INTERNATIONAL
ACCALAUREATE
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

FOR TEXAS PARENTS



TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
SPRING 1997



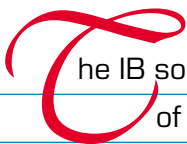
What is the International Baccalaureate Program?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is an internationally recognized curriculum that offers 11th and 12th grade students an opportunity to earn the IB diploma. The program is offered in over 700 public and private secondary schools in more than 90 countries around the world. To earn the IB diploma, students complete and test in six IB subjects; write an extended essay of independent research guided by a faculty mentor, complete 150 hours of creative, action, and service activities (CAS); and participate in a critical thinking course called Theory of Knowledge. This advanced, comprehensive program of study offers an integrated approach to learning across the disciplines with an emphasis on meeting the challenges of living and working in a global, technological society. Students who take IB courses without completing the entire program may earn IB certificates by testing in selected IB courses.



've never heard of the International Baccalaureate before. Is it an organization?

The International Baccalaureate Program is governed by the International Baccalaureate Organization in Geneva, Switzerland and administered by the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Center in Cardiff, Wales. The organization originated over thirty years ago in Europe as an effort by international schools to assure quality educational standards for students, regardless of where they lived. Today, the organization uses the talents of educators around the world to continuously update curriculum, train teachers, assess student work, and evaluate the program.



he IB sounds like a great deal of work. What are the advantages of taking an IB curriculum?

There are numerous advantages to taking the IB curriculum. First, the IB curriculum was originally designed to insure a cohesive, comprehensive education for students, no matter where they lived in the world. Today, that goal is still at the forefront of the IB mission. Students who complete this program are preparing, not only for success in college, but for success in life. Students gain a broader world view; follow in-depth approaches to the academic disciplines; and develop time management, problem-solving, research, and organizational skills that will remain with them long after the IB experience is over. CAS activities provide opportunities for student involvement in the larger community beyond classroom walls.

An additional benefit is that student work is assessed over a two-year period using internationally accepted performance standards. Student achievement is assessed in a variety of ways: on examinations that are developed and scored by international examiners; on oral language demonstrations in both the student's native language and a modern second language; and on science laboratory notebooks, art portfolios, computer science dossiers, essays, and other projects. These activities all count for a percentage of the student's final score in each subject and allow the classroom teacher to have input to the student's scores.

The IB Program also allows for student and school flexibility in choosing areas of academic interest for student research. The IB offers such unique courses as Information Technology in a Global Society and Environmental Systems. Another advantage is that passing scores on IB higher level examinations can aid students in qualifying for the Texas Distinguished

Achievement Program for high school graduation. Finally, many students obtain advanced standing at colleges and universities, based on their IB scores. Some IB diploma candidates enter highly selective universities with sophomore standing.



What is the
Texas Distinguished
Achievement Program?

The Distinguished Achievement Program replaces the Advanced High School Program and Advanced with Honors High School Program. The program requires students to complete the 24-credit high school program (including a third year of a foreign language) in courses with advanced measures at the college or professional level that are assessed by outside evaluators. To achieve this distinguished recognition, students must complete four of the advanced measures listed below:

- a.) Earn a score of 3 or above on a College Board Advance Placement (AP) exam or a score of 4 or above on an IB exam. Each exam counts as one measure.
- b.) Complete original research or a project under the direction of a mentor, report it to an appropriate audience, and have it judged by a panel of professionals in the field on which the project is focused.
- c.) Earn a score on the PSAT that qualifies the student for recognition as a Commended Scholar or better.
- d.) Earn a grade of 3.0 or higher on courses that count for college credit.
- e.) Earn a license awarded by a professional board or association. This may count for only one measure, regardless of the number of licenses earned.



How is the IB different
from AP? Is one
better than the other?

The IB is a comprehensive curriculum that requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through both in-class and outside assessments in six academic areas. Campuses that offer IB must be prepared to offer the total program upon initial implementation. AP, on the other hand, permits campuses to pick and choose from over 30 offerings. While neither program is better than the other, they each have different aims. Students whose main goal is college credit will probably choose AP because Texas colleges offer credit on a more widespread basis for satisfactory AP test scores than for IB scores. Students whose main goal is preparation for either a career with an international perspective or college in another country may prefer IB because of its recognition at overseas universities. Also, IB diploma students who plan to attend selective colleges may receive preferential admissions consideration and/or college credit for satisfactory IB exam scores.

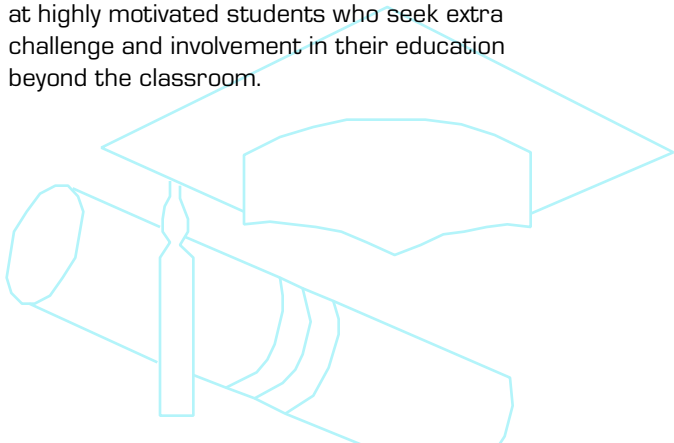


How do

IB courses

compare to other high school courses?

IB courses are more challenging. They are aimed at highly motivated students who seek extra challenge and involvement in their education beyond the classroom.





Why should I encourage my child to take IB courses?

Students who succeed in the IB Program do better than many other groups of students in university level work. Two studies carried out in the 1980s indicated that IB students maintained higher grade point averages at universities and earned higher average SAT scores than students who had not attended IB schools. Clearly, the knowledge and skills obtained in an IB Program prepare students to succeed in higher education. Furthermore, university admissions officials expect students to take the most challenging courses of which they are capable in high school. Also, students who take IB courses learn to see the world from a variety of perspectives, to examine different points of view, and to see themselves as part of the world community.



What preparation does my child need in order to succeed in an IB Program?

Because IB courses offer a high degree of challenge, students should, above all, be highly motivated learners. To participate in the IB diploma program, students should take algebra in the eighth grade and begin foreign language study no later than the ninth grade. In addition, students should complete graduation requirements such as health, P.E. and speech early in their high school program. Honors or enriched level classes from middle school onward provide solid academic training for the IB. Students need to develop good reading and writing skills and good study habits early in their schooling.



What

IB courses are
required for the IB diploma?

IB diploma students take six academic courses during their junior and senior years. The six required areas are:

- a. Language A (English or the student's native language)
- b. Language B (a modern second language which is spoken today)
- c. Individuals and Societies (History, Geography, Economics, Philosophy, Psychology, Social Anthropology, or Organization and Management Studies)
- d. Experimental Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Systems, or Design Technology)
- e. Mathematics
- f. A sixth area subject, which may include Art, Music, Theater, Computer Studies, a second experimental science, a second social studies, Classical Language, or History and Culture of the Islamic World.

IB diploma students also take Theory of Knowledge, a course that encourages students to make connections among the academic disciplines and to examine knowledge, perception, and language as they relate to those disciplines. An extended essay based on independent research is required also.



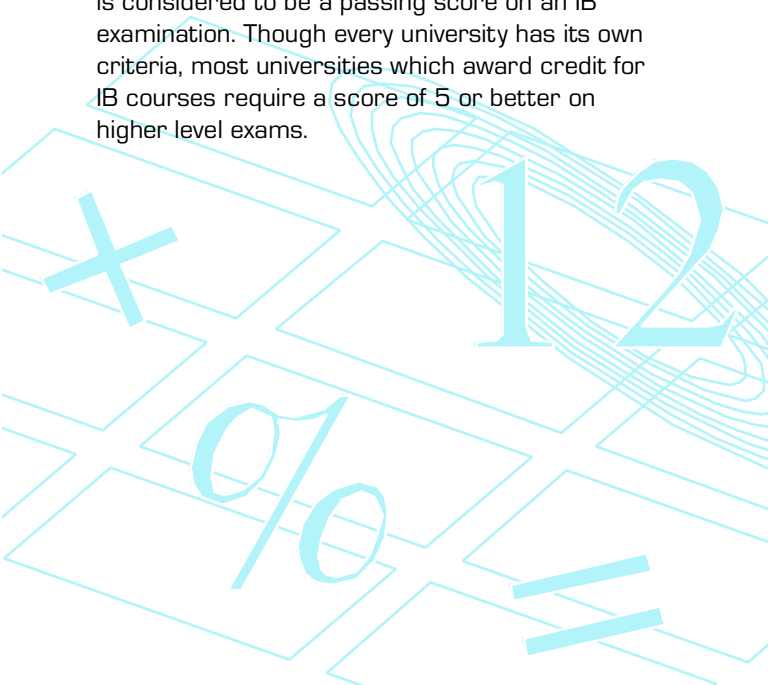
How and when do IB students test in their subjects?

IB diploma candidates test in three of their subjects at the higher level and three of their subjects at the subsidiary level. Two subsidiary level tests may be taken in May of the junior year. All other tests are taken in May of the senior year. Higher level tests are longer and more challenging than subsidiary level tests; these are the tests which may qualify for college credit. All examinations are administered by the high school, which is responsible for ensuring that IB standards for testing conditions are met.



What scores must a student earn in order to gain the diploma?

Diploma candidates must earn a total of 24 points on their six IB examinations. Bonus points may be awarded for excellent extended essays, and for excellent Theory of Knowledge work. A score of 4 is considered to be a passing score on an IB examination. Though every university has its own criteria, most universities which award credit for IB courses require a score of 5 or better on higher level exams.





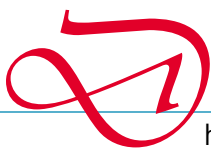
How much will IB examinations cost?

Currently, IB fees are a one-time \$65 registration fee and \$48 per exam. There is also an extended essay fee of \$30 and a Theory of Knowledge fee of \$15. The per capita fee of \$125 is frequently paid by the school rather than by the student. The Texas Advanced Placement Incentive Program can provide financial assistance of up to \$25 per test for those who need it. When fees are totaled, they are comparable to the fees for AP exams on a per test average.



Will my child receive college credit for IB tests?

Every college has its own credit policies concerning AP and IB test scores, and students should research individual college policies. No high school can promise college credit based on these test scores. Texas schools which currently publish IB credit policies include University of Dallas, University of Houston, University of Texas at Austin, Texas A & M University, Southwestern University, St. Mary's University, Southern Methodist University, Stephen F. Austin State University, Sam Houston State University and Ambassador College. Such universities as Harvard, Radcliffe, MIT, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, Stanford, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Marquette and many others across the nation offer credit and/or preferential admissions consideration to IB diploma candidates.



Does my child
have to take an IB
course in order to take an IB exam?

Yes! The IB is a curriculum that provides for ongoing assessment throughout the two-year program. Because a percentage of the exam score is based on those assessments, the student cannot just sit for an exam without having taken the course.



How can I help my
child prepare
for IB courses?

Students who plan to take IB courses should begin their preparation early, certainly by middle school. Encourage students to develop and practice good study habits and to work on time management skills. Proficiency in a second language is necessary so language classes should begin early. Maintaining a serious attitude toward learning, developing independence, and encouraging self-motivation are all important factors in student success at any level.

Español

Latin

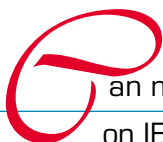
English

Deutsch



How can I be sure the
courses my
child is taking are preparing
him/her for IB courses?

Schools that belong to the IB organization must undergo a rigorous selection process. They constantly scrutinize and evaluate their own programs in order to be certain that they measure up to IB standards. Each year, the International Baccalaureate Assessment Center provides schools with feedback about student and teacher performance that helps schools to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in each subject. The IB organization also carries out periodic reevaluations of member schools and provides ongoing teacher training. IB schools want their programs to succeed, and that happens when students succeed.



Can my child succeed
on IB exams if our school
is on a 4x4 (semester) block schedule?

Because IB exams are administered in May, schools that use the 4 x 4 schedule usually provide a scheduled time for review in the spring for courses that concluded in the fall semester.

My child's school does not offer the IB program. How can my child have the opportunity to participate in IB?

There are approximately 16 high schools in Texas that currently offer the IB program and others, are in the application process. Several of them offer IB as a magnet program that accepts students from anywhere in their district or from their metropolitan area. A school that wants to offer the IB Program should investigate the program by contacting both the office of the International Baccalaureate North America in New York and other IB schools in the state. If the school community feels that the necessary resources can be provided, the school administration can begin the IB application process. Investigation, application and teacher training typically take about two years before a school is accepted and ready to begin teaching IB courses.





o find out more about

IB programs contact:

- ★ The Education Service Center in your region

- ★ Division of Advanced Academic Services
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
512-463-9455

- ★ International Baccalaureate, N.A.
200 Madison Avenue, Suite 2007
New York, NY 10016
212-696-4464



Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

BR7 202 02